

# Wildlife Crossings

**Oregon State Legislature  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON  
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# Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Costs

- Nationally, wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) exceed **\$8 billion annually**
- 6,100 WVCs were recorded in 2019 in Oregon (actual number is at least 2x the number reported). The most common type of WVC is with mule deer.
- **State Farm Insurance** found that Oregon has the highest likelihood of wildlife crashes among west coast states.
- Average cost of a vehicle collision with a **mule deer costs \$9,086; collisions with elk cost \$24,006**. The cumulative cost of collisions with those two species in Oregon totaled **\$56.9 million in 2020**. This includes vehicle damage, medical expenses, and lost hunting value in 2021 dollars.
- The value of the animal to the public can be up to **\$50,000 for some species**.

# Wildlife Crossings: Effective Solutions

- The Lava Butte wildlife underpass on highway 97 in Central Oregon has reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by more than 85%.
- In Colorado, the wildlife crossings on State Highway 9 have reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by 89%.
- Utah saw a [98.5% reduction in deer mortalities](#) when it built two animal underpasses on a stretch of highway that blocked traditional migratory routes.
- In Arizona, a fencing project linking three existing crossing structures on SR 260 reduced elk-vehicle collisions [by 98 percent](#) over a six-year span.



# Wildlife Crossings: Good Investment

## Case Study: Colorado State Highway 9

- Before construction, 56.4 mule deer and elk carcasses reported/year, at a cost of over \$500,000/year
- 2015-2016 the Colorado Department of Transportation constructed seven wildlife crossings with 10 miles of wildlife funnel fencing a cost of roughly \$10M
- Number of carcasses in the project area decreased by 89% and the project is expected to pay for itself in ~22 years, long before the 75-year lifespan of the project

## Case Study: Wyoming Highway 191

- Before construction, wildlife-vehicle collisions were costing over \$500,000/year.
- 2012 two overpasses, six underpasses, and 12 miles of wildlife funnel fencing completed at a cost of roughly \$11M.
- 3 years after construction, wildlife-vehicle collisions dropped by 81%, and pronghorn-vehicle collisions were completely eliminated.
- Crossings are estimated to pay for themselves in ~17 years, 50+ years before their estimated 75-year lifespan.

**86% of Oregonians Support Building More  
Overpasses and Underpasses for Wildlife**

**75% of Oregonians Support Increasing  
Funding To Build Wildlife Crossing  
Structures**

[Source: GBAO poll 2020](#)

- **Oregon Action Team on Ungulate Migration (OAT)**

Statewide focus on ungulate migration conservation, including addressing barriers to migration. Comprised of representatives from:

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Burns Paiute Tribe, Central Oregon LandWatch, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, ICF, Mule Deer Foundation, Oregon Hunters Association, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Protect Animal Migration, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Trout Unlimited

- **Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition (SOWCC)**

Working to identify and establish one or more safe wildlife crossings along I-5 between Ashland and the California border. Includes representatives from:

ODOT, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Southern Oregon University, Oregon Hunters Association, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Soda Mountain Wilderness Council, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Pacific Forest Trust, Trout Unlimited, Rogue Valley Audubon Society, KS Wild, Selberg Institute, SC Wildlands, Oregon Wildlife Foundation.